

## Graveyard Of Hopes

*I can't remember exactly when this poem, which is a deliberate re-writing of June Boyce Tillman's hymn, "We shall go out with hope of Resurrection" was written but I can remember why. I dug it out again when I heard the news that a good friend of ours was going to be the first minister in sole pastoral charge of a Baptist church in Scotland. Fortunately, the Baptist Union in Scotland has moved on since the assembly many years ago that I attended (Andy and I had just moved down from Scotland to England so I could train for ministry) where the issue of women's ordination was debated and the resolution to allow women on to the accredited list was defeated. On that occasion someone made the decision to go ahead with leading us in the planned hymn, "We shall go out with hope of resurrection". To sing a hymn speaking of resurrection at that moment felt like rubbing salt into a very open wound and we left Scotland feeling the pain of discrimination and exclusion even more acutely. This poem was written out of that deep pain and anger. We have moved on, but it feels right to include it on Dancing Scarecrow as a reminder of the pain we can and do cause when we exclude others.*

We shall go out with hope of resurrection  
and the nails were driven further into the coffin  
holding the corpse of our hopes  
as the tears streamed silently down our faces  
the rousing melody dancing on the graveyard  
where our dream of ordination lay trampled in the dirt.

We set our faces not to show the pain  
lest we be deemed too emotional  
out-smarted by rational level-headed argument  
and the weight of centuries of oppressive tradition  
as it declares those who create life and nurse through to life's end  
cannot administer the sacraments of birth and death.

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